

and secure pension benefit to workers during retirement.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3108 is by no means a permanent solution but it will provide a short-term replacement to ensure certainty and security for workers and employers while committing Congress to immediately proceed with efforts to identify a permanent long-term solution. I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this common sense legislation and voting in favor of the Pension Funding Equity Act.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, during House consideration of H.R. 3108 I was in Iraq visiting U.S. troops and touring U.S. reconstruction efforts. Had I been here, I would have supported passage of H.R. 3108, the Pension Funding Equity Act of 2003.

I support H.R. 3108 as a temporary response to a pressing issue that ultimately affects the retirement benefits of millions of American workers, their families, and beneficiaries. Today the House will protect the benefits of those workers who have a pension benefit under our defined benefit system.

The Pension Funding Equity Act would replace the current standards that employers must use to determine their pension liabilities—the 30-year Treasury bond interest rate—with a corporate bond index rate for 2 years through December 31, 2005. The 30-year Treasury bond interest rate is set to expire this year, jeopardizing pension funds across the country. The bill gives the Treasury Department the flexibility to establish the discount interest rate based on a blend of corporate bond index rates. This change will provide employers with greater certainty and short-term funding relief and strengthen defined benefit pension plans workers in the short term while Congress takes a broader look at the defined benefit system as a whole and the issues that affect the retirement security of American workers. As we progress down the road of defining the long-term answer, the bottom line must be to enable businesses to fill their pension funds, and, more importantly, that they are fully funding them.

As a Member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, as well as the House Committee on Financial Services, I have participated in hearings that highlight the plight of American workers, beyond defined benefit plans, who have suffered from a lack of retirement security. It has also become all too clear that addressing this issue is an extremely delicate and difficult task.

It is imperative that this Congress work overtime to ensure today's workforce retire with the benefits they have spent their adult life building. I am committed to asking the difficult questions and pressing for the sometimes controversial answers. We are all aware of Enron and World Com, but we must look beyond these most recent crises. We must look at past documented instances of corporations using innovative ways to rob pension assets. For example, some have projected unrealistically high rates of returns to claim that the plan is overfunded, declare bankruptcy but set up a special bankruptcy-proof pension plan for top executives, and define employees as independent contractors. In asking these tough questions we will be able to give business the tools they need to create fair funds, absent any deceit. For the sake of the millions of workers who rely on the security of their retirement we must be tough on fiscal trickery and strong on pension protection.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to the order of the House of Tuesday, October 7, 2003, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

ADOPTION PROMOTION ACT OF 2003

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3182) to reauthorize the adoption incentive payments program under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3182

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Adoption Promotion Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) In 1997, the Congress passed the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 to promote comprehensive child welfare reform to ensure that consideration of children's safety is paramount in child welfare decisions, and to provide a greater sense of urgency to find every child a safe, permanent home.

(2) The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 also created the Adoption Incentives program, which authorizes incentive payments to States to promote adoptions, with additional incentives provided for the adoption of foster children with special needs.

(3) Since 1997, all States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have qualified for incentive payments for their work in promoting adoption of foster children.

(4) Between 1997 and 2002, adoptions increased by 64 percent, and adoptions of children with special needs increased by 63 per-

cent; however, 542,000 children remain in foster care, and 126,000 are eligible for adoption.

(5) Although substantial progress has been made to promote adoptions, attention should be focused on promoting adoption of older children. Recent data suggest that half of the children waiting to be adopted are age 9 or older.

SEC. 3. REAUTHORIZATION OF ADOPTION INCENTIVE PAYMENTS PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 473A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

"(2)(A) the number of foster child adoptions in the State during the fiscal year exceeds the base number of foster child adoptions for the State for the fiscal year; or

"(B) the number of older child adoptions in the State during the fiscal year exceeds the base number of older child adoptions for the State for the fiscal year;"

(B) in paragraph (4), by striking "and 2002" and inserting "through 2007"; and

(C) in paragraph (5), by striking "2002" and inserting "2007";

(2) in subsection (c), by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

"(2) DETERMINATION OF NUMBERS OF ADOPTIONS BASED ON AFCARS DATA.—The Secretary shall determine the numbers of foster child adoptions, of special needs adoptions that are not older child adoptions, and of older child adoptions in a State during each of fiscal years 2002 through 2007, for purposes of this section, on the basis of data meeting the requirements of the system established pursuant to section 479, as reported by the State and approved by the Secretary by August 1 of the succeeding fiscal year;"

(3) in subsection (d)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking "and";

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) by inserting "that are not older child adoptions" after "adoptions" each place it appears; and

(ii) by striking the period and inserting "and"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

"(C) \$4,000, multiplied by the amount (if any) by which the number of older child adoptions in the State during the fiscal year exceeds the base number of older child adoptions for the State for the fiscal year;"

(4) in subsection (g)—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking subparagraphs (A) and (B) and inserting the following:

"(A) with respect to fiscal year 2003, the number of foster child adoptions in the State in fiscal year 2002; and

"(B) with respect to any subsequent fiscal year, the number of foster child adoptions in the State in the fiscal year for which the number is the greatest in the period that begins with fiscal year 2002 and ends with the fiscal year preceding that subsequent fiscal year;"

(B) in paragraph (4)—

(i) in the paragraph heading, by inserting "THAT ARE NOT OLDER CHILD ADOPTIONS" after "ADOPTIONS"; and

(ii) by striking subparagraphs (A) and (B) and inserting the following:

"(A) with respect to fiscal year 2003, the number of special needs adoptions that are not older child adoptions in the State in fiscal year 2002; and

"(B) with respect to any subsequent fiscal year, the number of special needs adoptions that are not older child adoptions in the State in the fiscal year for which the number is the greatest in the period that begins with fiscal year 2002 and ends with the fiscal year preceding that subsequent fiscal year;"

(C) by adding at the end the following:

"(5) BASE NUMBER OF OLDER CHILD ADOPTIONS.—The term 'base number of older child adoptions for a State' means—

"(A) with respect to fiscal year 2003, the number of older child adoptions in the State in fiscal year 2002; and

"(B) with respect to any subsequent fiscal year, the number of older child adoptions in the State in the fiscal year for which the number is the greatest in the period that begins with fiscal year 2002 and ends with the fiscal year preceding that subsequent fiscal year.

"(6) OLDER CHILD ADOPTIONS.—The term 'older child adoptions' means the final adoption of a child who has attained 9 years of age if—

"(A) at the time of the adoptive placement, the child was in foster care under the supervision of the State; or

"(B) an adoption assistance agreement was in effect under section 473 with respect to the child.";

(5) in subsection (h)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in subparagraph (B), by striking "and";

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period and inserting "; and"; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

"(D) \$43,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2004 through 2008."; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by inserting "; or under any other law for grants under subsection (a)," after "(1)"; and

(ii) by striking "2003" and inserting "2008";

(6) in subsection (i)(4), by striking "1998 through 2000" and inserting "2004 through 2006"; and

(7) by striking subsection (j).

(b) REPORT ON ADOPTION AND OTHER PERMANENCY OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.—Not later than October 1, 2004, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on State efforts to promote adoption and other permanency options for children in foster care, with special emphasis on older children in foster care. In preparing this report, the Secretary shall review State waiver programs and consult with representatives from State governments, public and private child welfare agencies, and child advocacy organizations to identify promising approaches.

SEC. 4. AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO SUBMIT AFCARS REPORT.

Section 474 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 674) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(f)(1) If the Secretary finds that a State has failed to submit to the Secretary data, as required by regulation, for the data collection system implemented under section 479, the Secretary shall, within 30 days after the date by which the data was due to be so submitted, notify the State of the failure and that payments to the State under this part will be reduced if the State fails to submit the data, as so required, within 6 months after the date the data was originally due to be so submitted.

"(2) If the Secretary finds that the State has failed to submit the data, as so required, by the end of the 6-month period referred to in paragraph (1) of this subsection, then, notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section and any regulations promulgated under section 1123A(b)(3), the Secretary shall reduce the amounts otherwise payable to the State under this part, for each quarter ending in the 6-month period (and each quarter ending in each subsequent consecutively occurring 6-month period until the Secretary finds that the State has submitted the data, as so required), by—

"(A) $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 percent of the total amount expended by the State for administration of foster care activities under the State plan approved under this part in the quarter so ending, in the case of the 1st 6-month period during which the failure continues; or

"(B) $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 percent of the total amount so expended, in the case of the 2nd or any subsequent such 6-month period.".

SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this Act shall take effect on October 1, 2003.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP).

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3182, the Adoption Promotion Act of 2003, which was introduced with bipartisan support. This legislation reauthorizes the Adoption Incentive Program, which was created as part of the Adoption and Safe Families Act in 1997.

Since 1997 until 2002, we have seen adoptions increase by 64 percent. Special-needs adoptions during that same period have increased by 63 percent. We are here today to reauthorize a successful program, while making key improvements to that program. Adoption is about parents and families opening their homes and hearts to children who need a family.

Growing up with a loving family is essential to every child, not only emotionally but also intellectually. Just last week we held the Angels in Adoption dinner put on by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, which recognizes adoptive families throughout the country; and hundreds of parents were there. I spent the night honoring a couple from my district, Coleman, Michigan, Charlie and Gerry Brown, who began with six biological children, began to expand their family when they opened their home to a young foster girl in 1990. Today they have 14 adoptives, and they are in the process of adopting two more boys, making them the proud parents of 22 children.

I think the Browns exemplify everything good about adoption, but we need more families who will bring children into their homes. Approximately 126,000 children currently are awaiting adoption, half of whom are 9 years of age or older, and these are children who have the least chance of being adopted and the greatest chance of spending the rest of their childhood in foster care, which is unacceptable by anyone's standards.

The Adoption Promotion Act of 2003 enhances the current incentive program for adoption, which rewards States that increase the number of children adopted by creating a new incentive for States that increase the adoptions of children age 9 and older as well.

I thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources, the

gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER), and the ranking member, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), for working on this important measure in such a bipartisan effort which allows this bill to come to the floor. I thank the staff of the Subcommittee on Human Resources for their hard work.

There is nothing more special than seeing a parent, a mom or dad, bringing a new son or daughter into their family through adoption. This bill achieves this important goal, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) for his strong support on this important issue. He has been steadfast in helping families in the adoption arena, and this is just one more chapter in his record in this area. I also thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) for the way in which this bill was handled in our subcommittee. It was done in a bipartisan way involving the views of administrators, advocates, and experts in the field; and we have come up with an excellent bill which I encourage my colleagues to support.

This bill deals with foster children. Obviously, the first goal of placement for foster children is to try to reunite them with their birth parents, but that is not always possible. When that is not possible, we want to find a safe and permanent home as quickly as possible for that foster child.

In 1997, we enacted the Safe and Stable Families Act. This legislation, H.R. 3182, continues the record that we started in 1997. It includes adoption incentive bonuses for payments to States that increase the number of adoption of children out of foster care. And as the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) pointed out, since the enactment of this legislation in 1997, we have seen a 64 percent increase in the adoption of children out of foster care, and that number has held true for children with special needs.

H.R. 3182 extends that program for 5 years. That is certainly our goal, to reauthorize programs that work for a 5-year period; and this bill does that. We also update the baseline. That is a very important fact because it allows more States the opportunity to benefit from these payments. We enhance payments for older children in foster care that are adopted.

Mr. Speaker, over half of our children currently in foster care are over the age of 9. They are the more difficult children to find permanent homes through adoption. This legislation recognizes that and rewards States that are able to find permanent placement adoptions for children over the age of 9. Funds can be used for a variety of child welfare services, including post adoptive services, so we are providing the

wherewithal, particularly in these tough economic times, to our States in order to move forward in this important program to help America's most vulnerable children.

We also direct the agency to move forward with another option for permanent placement, and that is subsidize guardianship where the foster child is placed with a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or other family member. In many cases, that is the preferred option; and we are making it easier for that option to become a reality.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation enjoys broad support. It is supported by the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund, the Center for Law and Social Policy, Voices for Adoption, and the list goes on and on. It is a very important bill, and I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) for his outstanding leadership in crafting this bipartisan legislation, as well as commending the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the ranking member, for his work on it as well. I am very pleased to be a cosponsor of this legislation.

As chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, I appreciate the dedication and commitment of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) to children's issues. Nationally, more than 18,000 children have been adopted since Congress created the Adoption Incentive Program in 1997. In my home State of California, adoptions have more than doubled. This is tremendous progress. As a result, States have received almost \$160 million they can use to support families and children in distress. Despite this progress, there are still 126,000 children waiting to be adopted. This legislation will encourage States to find adoptive families for these children by continuing and improving the Adoption Incentive Program for 5 more years.

I am pleased this legislation adds a new incentive to promote adoption of children age 9 or older, as the Bush administration proposed. These children are most at risk to spend their childhood in foster care and never find an adoptive family, so they deserve our special attention.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support of this legislation. I look forward to working with them to promote safe adoptive placements for children in foster care. This bill is certainly a worthy step in that direction. I urge all Members to support this excellent legislation.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation. I want to commend the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) for the leadership that they have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate in this area.

As chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus' Child Welfare Brain Trust, and also coming from a community where I have a very active advisory committee on child welfare issues, and also coming from a community where there is one of the greatest needs for adoption that exists in the country, much of the inner city of Chicago, this legislation is tremendously important.

The idea of providing an opportunity for children who could not experience family life, to give them the opportunity to have the well-being, the nurturing of a family rather than being institutionalized or as a ward of the State is of tremendous value. I simply want to add my voice in support of it. Again, I commend the gentlemen for their strong leadership and the articulation of a need that exists.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I appreciate the gentleman's comments and again thank all of the Members for this bipartisan effort here. I also want to note that the majority leader did have an impact on this bill and required that there be penalties on the Health and Human Services Agency if they do not submit timely and complete adoption and foster care data. This will help us track exactly where children are, how long they are spending in foster care, and what their needs are. This is an important provision, and I wanted to highlight that for the Members as well.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Adoption Promotion Act of 2003 (H.R. 3182). This bipartisan bill would amend and reauthorize the Adoption Incentives Program and add necessary provisions to strengthen this important program.

I am particularly encouraged by provisions to enhance the adoption of older children in foster care. In addition to incentives for the adoption of special needs children, H.R. 3182 would create a third incentive payment equal to \$4,000 for each increased adoption of foster children who are age 9 or older at the time of adoption.

As I stand before you today there are approximately 588,000 children in the foster care system in the United States. The average age of children in foster care is 10 years. We know that the longer children are in foster care the more challenging their lives become. It is also less likely that these children will be adopted. Most children waiting to be adopted are school-aged or in a sibling group that needs to stay together. Many have emotional disabilities; others have physical, mental or developmental disabilities. All need the love of a permanent family.

Serious disparities in the racial and ethnic breakdown of children in foster care com-

pound the problems faced by children in protective services. In 1980, 47 percent of the children in foster care were children of color. By 2000, 66 percent of children in foster care were children of color. Minority children are disproportionately represented in the foster care system by a margin of more than two to one. Health disparities that face minority children further exacerbate the problems that they face as children in foster care.

In addition to supporting H.R. 3182, I urge my colleagues to take time to review and act on comprehensive child service reform measures that maintain a strong Federal responsibility to our most vulnerable children and families. This bipartisan legislation is a step in the right direction of Federal responsibility to participate fully with the States in meeting this fundamental obligation. Real reform, including new investments, is required to respond to the needs of the over 500,000 abused and neglected children currently in foster care and to keep all children safe from harm. Recent research shows that:

Children who received "services" from Child Protection Services died as a result of abuse 16 times more often than children in the general population.

Last year, in the 18th District of Texas, 8,039 in protective services were in investigation of child abuse and neglect.

Children were abused and neglected 3 times more often by State caregivers than by parents (and children are eleven times more likely to be sexually abused in State care than they are in their own homes).

The Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that in 2002, there were an estimated 560,000 children in foster care across the U.S. and an estimated 3 million children involved in investigations by child protective services of abuse or neglect. In the States reporting, an average of 11.8 children were victims of abuse or neglect for every 1,000 children in the population.

In my own State of Texas the number of children who died as a result of abuse or neglect recently increased and child protection services was involved with 36% of those children who died.

It is urgent that we stabilize the lives of our children by promoting adoption and other permanency options for our children. They are at risk in the child welfare system as it stands. All children deserve and thrive best when they are in stable, permanent loving homes. We, as a country, must commit ourselves to doing a better job of protecting and caring for our children. The Adoption Promotion Act, H.R. 3182, is a step in the right direction.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, since we first passed the Adoption and Safe Families Act in 1997, adoptions out of foster care have increased 64 percent.

That's thousands of children in permanent homes who, before this law was enacted, were wandering through the foster care system unprotected, unloved, and sometimes forgotten all together.

But not anymore. The tide has turned in this fight for the hope of a generation of American children.

We've made American foster care a priority and made the decision, as a Nation, to no longer focus on the system, but the children themselves.

The next step in this pivot away from despair and toward hope is to ensure States stay

focused on their responsibilities to foster children.

After a GAO report—requested by Senator GRASSLEY and me—revealed that some State governments are failing to adequately keep and provide information about foster children in their care, I worked with Chairman HERGER and lead sponsor Mr. CAMP to add a new provision to this bill.

The new provision imposes penalties on those States that do not keep up their records, and thereby let their foster children slip through the cracks.

Every new phase in a foster child's journey through the system can be the wrong turn that makes the difference between happiness and despair.

How can we expect them to work hard in school, stay optimistic about their future, and never lose hope if we can't even keep track of their address?

These kids start out in life facing adversity before they even know what the word means. They carry doubt and fear around on their backs like crosses. This provision and this bill will give America's foster children hope, and a better chance at finding the unconditional love they all deserve, but so few have ever known.

I thank the gentlemen for all their hard work in this legislation, and I urge all my colleagues to vote in favor of it.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3182, the Adoption Promotion Act of 2003, which continues to reward states for their efforts to promote adoption of children in need of loving families.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation as it reauthorizes the Adoption Incentives program. This program was created as part of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, which was signed into law while I was the Chairman of the Ways and Means' Human Resources Subcommittee. This law has resulted in moving thousands of children out of hopeless foster care situations and into loving adoptive families.

The current Adoption Incentives program rewards states that make gains in the number of children adopted and provides additional incentives for the adoption of foster children with special needs. Between 1997 and 2002, adoptions increased by 64 percent, and adoptions of children with special needs increased by 63 percent. However, more work needs to be done to assist the 542,000 children who remain in foster care, and the 126,000 who are eligible for adoption.

Research suggests that many older children still linger in foster care, so we must do more to encourage states to find adoptive families for these children. The Adoption Promotion Act of 2003 takes the necessary steps to enhance the current incentive program, by creating a new incentive for states that increase adoptions of children age 9 or older. Our children do not deserve to be languishing in foster care or living in dangerous situations. This bill will take a big step towards righting that wrong.

I would like to commend my colleagues on the Committee on Ways and Means, Representatives DAVE CAMP and BEN CARDIN, for their commitment to improving the Adoption Incentives program by the introduction of the Adoption Promotion Act of 2003. Their work on this legislation will assure that states continue to find safe, permanent homes for America's children.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that we continue to reward states for their good work in making adoptive matches and add additional incentive for those children still waiting for a home and loving family. With this in mind, I urge my colleagues to support America's foster children who are waiting on adoption by voting for this important bill.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3182.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3182, the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

VETERANS BENEFITS ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2297) to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify and improve certain benefits for veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2297

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Benefits Act of 2003".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Expansion of Montgomery GI Bill education benefits for certain self-employment training.
- Sec. 3. Extension in period of eligibility for survivors' and dependents' education benefits for individuals who are involuntarily ordered to full-time National Guard duty.
- Sec. 4. Extension of Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education.
- Sec. 5. Repeal of provisions relating to obsolete education loan program.
- Sec. 6. Retention of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation for surviving spouses remarrying after age 55.
- Sec. 7. Eligibility of surviving spouses who remarry for burial in national cemeteries.
- Sec. 8. Permanent authority for State cemetery grants.

Sec. 9. Reinstatement of veterans vocational training program for certain pension recipients.

Sec. 10. Increase in amounts for certain adaptive benefits for disabled veterans.

Sec. 11. Presumptions of service-connection relating to diseases and disabilities of former prisoners of war.

Sec. 12. Extension of spina bifida benefits for children of Vietnam-era veterans.

Sec. 13. Permanent authority for housing loans for members of the Selected Reserve.

Sec. 14. Adjustment to home loan fees and uniformity of fees for qualifying Reserve members with fees for active duty veterans.

Sec. 15. Reinstatement of minimum requirements for sale of vendee loans.

Sec. 16. Rate of payment of benefits for certain Filipino veterans and their survivors residing in the United States.

Sec. 17. Burial benefits for new Philippine scouts residing in the United States.

Sec. 18. Extension of authority to maintain regional office in the Republic of the Philippines.

Sec. 19. Outstationing of transition assistance program personnel.

Sec. 20. Forfeiture of benefits for subversive activities.

Sec. 21. Technical amendments related to Jobs for Veterans Act.

Sec. 22. Technical and conforming relating to establishment of Social Security Administration as an independent agency.

SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF MONTGOMERY GI BILL EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN SELF-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING.

(a) DEFINITION OF TRAINING ESTABLISHMENT.—Section 3452(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "means any" and all that follows and inserting "means any of the following:

"(1) An establishment providing apprentice or other training on the job, including those under the supervision of a college or university or any State department of education.

"(2) An establishment providing self-employment on-job training consisting of full-time training for a period of less than six months that is needed or accepted for purposes of obtaining licensure to engage in a self-employment occupation or required for ownership and operation of a franchise that is the objective of the training.

"(3) A State board of vocational education.

"(4) A Federal or State apprenticeship registration agency.

"(5) A joint apprenticeship committee established pursuant to the Act of August 16, 1937, popularly known as the 'National Apprenticeship Act' (29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).

"(6) An agency of the Federal Government authorized to supervise such training."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is six months after the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply to self-employment on-job training approved and pursued on or after that date.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION IN PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY FOR SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE INVOLUNTARILY ORDERED TO FULL-TIME NATIONAL GUARD DUTY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3512(h) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting "or is involuntarily ordered to full-time National Guard duty under section 502(f) of title 32," after "title 10,".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect as of September 11, 2001.